

quick facts

About... *Human Papillomavirus (HPV)*

What is HPV?

Human papillomavirus infection is the most common sexually transmitted infection in the United States. Persistent HPV infection can lead to the development of pre-cancerous lesions and cancer of the cervix. HPV infection is also associated with genital warts and other genital cancers.

What are the symptoms of HPV infection?

Most HPV infections show no symptoms but genital warts and abnormal pap test results may occur.

How is HPV spread?

HPV is transmitted sexually by skin-to-skin contact with an infected person.

How is HPV infection treated?

There is no specific treatment for HPV infection.

How can HPV infection be prevented?

- Abstaining from sexual activity (refraining from genital contact) is the surest way to prevent genital HPV infection.
- HPV transmission can be reduced but not eliminated with the use of physical barriers such as condoms.
- There is a vaccine available to prevent infection with HPV types 6,11,16,18.

Who should get vaccinated to prevent HPV infection?

- The first vaccine to prevent HPV infection is named Gardasil. The vaccine was licensed in June of 2006 to be administered to females 9-26 years of age. It is recommended to be given to all 11-12 year old females and as "catch-up" vaccination for 13-26 year old females. Vaccination requires 3 injections to be given over a 6 month time period. The vaccine is most effective when given BEFORE the onset of sexual activity.

NOTE: The use of HPV vaccine does not eliminate the need for continued Pap test screening, since 30% of cervical cancers are caused by HPV types not included in the vaccine.

To view questions and answers about Human Papillomavirus (HPV), see the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) Web site at: <http://www.cdc.gov/vaccines/vpd-vac/hpv/hpv-vacsafe-effic.htm>